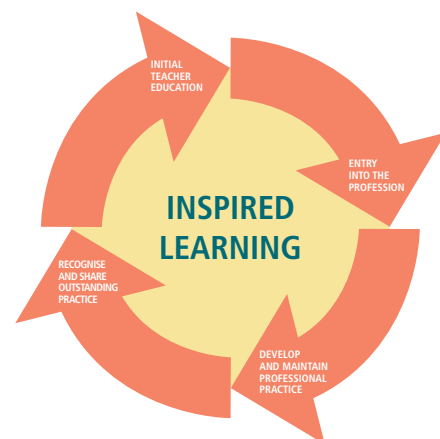


Great Teaching, Inspired Learning

Discussion paper



Minister's Introduction

We know that teaching is the single largest in-school determinant of success at school. Our students deserve the best possible teachers in every classroom, in every school. Teachers in NSW already do an amazing job, but as we face the challenges of effective learning in the 21st century, we owe it to the profession and to our children to think very carefully about how we can ensure NSW teachers are the best in the world. If we are serious about improving student outcomes we must have the best possible teaching.

So with the aim of starting a serious conversation about what we can do to improve the quality of teaching in our classrooms, I asked Dr Michele Bruniges, the Director-General of the NSW Department of Education and Communities, Mr Patrick Lee, the Chief Executive of the NSW Institute of Teachers, and Mr Tom Alegounarias, the President of the NSW Board of Studies, to write this paper.

I know that there are many teachers, principals, members of professional associations and education academics who have been thinking about and researching this area for many years. Their input will be critically important.

Equally important is for this to be a conversation that includes the broader community. Students, parents and employers need to have their say as well, because we know the quality of education will determine our quality of life and the economic success of our state and country.

To help guide feedback this discussion paper looks at five important areas. Firstly, at the centre of every conversation about great teaching is improving student learning. Inspired learning is only possible with great teaching. What are the features of great teaching that lead to inspired learning?

The training teachers get before they start teaching in schools is critical. When they undertake an initial teacher education course, how well does it prepare them to be teachers in a 21st century classroom? When teachers are in front of students for the first time, what can schools do to ensure they are given the support they need to continue to learn and become a successful teacher?

We already have Professional Teaching Standards and associated accreditation processes in NSW. How can these standards and processes more strongly support the very best teaching practices in our schools?

No profession can thrive without a commitment to ongoing critical examination of its practices and professional learning. What is the best support we can give teachers throughout their career paths to enable them to learn from each other and continue to develop their professional practice?

Finally, we need to think about how we identify, recognise and share outstanding practice among the teaching profession. What career structures are going to reward our best teachers and ensure there are incentives to keep great teachers in schools?

I strongly encourage you to read this paper and give us your feedback. You can do that in two ways: log on to www.schools.nsw.edu.au/greatteaching between 24 August and 5 October and complete the online survey; or send a submission to greatteaching@det.nsw.edu.au any time before 2 November 2012.

Give us your best ideas so that together we can build an even greater teaching profession for our children.



Adrian Piccoli MP
Minister for Education

Inspired learning

INSPIRED LEARNING

Learning in the 21st century presents new challenges and opportunities. New technologies are breaking down classroom walls and creating global virtual classrooms. As technology improves and new discoveries are made, our students will have unprecedented access to information and they will be judged by how they use what they know.

Students starting school this year will probably be working until the 2070s. We know that the rate of change in technology and in society is so fast that if we are going to prepare young people to live, work and be successful in the 21st century, they will need the ability to think both creatively and critically, problem solve and work collaboratively.

So if this is the world our children will live in, the value of their education is even more important. We know that in the future simply finishing high school will not be enough; post school qualifications will be the minimum.

The major economies of the world have already recognised this; which is why the emerging economies of India and China are trying to provide more of their young people with access to higher learning.

We need great teachers in our classrooms to inspire our young people to achieve.

Great teachers know the content of the subjects they teach and have a deep understanding of how learning happens. Great teachers have a rich repertoire of teaching strategies and know when to use specific strategies to optimise student learning.

Great teachers work in highly collaborative ways, reflect on their

practices and learn from others. Great teachers are always looking at ways they can use new data and research to become even better teachers.

Great teachers are passionate about the subjects they teach, and use this passion to inspire a thirst for knowledge and love of learning in their students.

NSW snapshot

- NSW and Australian students are among the best performing in the world. However, in recent international assessments the relative performance of Australian students has declined.
- Students in other OECD countries are overtaking us, and the proportion of Australian students who are performing at the highest levels is declining. The performance of Australian students from disadvantaged backgrounds is also not as good as in some other, similar countries.
- Our own national literacy and numeracy assessments (NAPLAN) show that there has been little improvement in the results of NSW primary school children between 2008 and 2011, and numeracy results for secondary school students are declining.

International snapshot

There is widespread agreement that teacher quality is the single greatest in-school influence on student outcomes. For instance:

- McKinsey and Company (2007), after analysing the world's top performing school systems, concluded that the quality of an education system

simply cannot exceed the quality of its teachers.

- John Hattie (2003) conducted a synthesis of numerous studies of the effects on student achievement and found that teacher quality was the greatest variable; it accounted for 30% of the variance on student performance.
- Linda Darling-Hammond (1999), after analysing evidence-based findings from a range of reports, concluded that the quality of teacher education and teaching more strongly related to student achievement than other issues such as class sizes, overall spending levels or teacher salaries.

Have your say

- What knowledge and skills will our children need to thrive in the 21st century?
- What makes a teacher inspiring?
- What should students expect from their teachers?
- What should parents expect from their child's teacher?
- How can teachers, parents and students work together to raise expectations for student outcomes?
- What are the clear messages from Australian and international research about how to support the best teaching and learning practices in our schools?

Initial teacher education



Teaching in the 21st century is more challenging than ever before. Teachers are being asked to prepare students to be active citizens and workers in a complex and changing world. Every person who graduates with an initial teacher education qualification should have a robust foundation of content and pedagogical knowledge and a repertoire of skills to support effective teaching from day one.

In NSW all teachers entering the profession have completed at least four years of study. Most have graduated from one of the 17 universities and other accredited higher education providers offering teaching degrees in NSW.

Since 2007, to help strengthen teacher preparation, all teacher education programs delivered in NSW have undergone a rigorous assessment process designed to improve the quality of graduate teachers and ensure they have met professional teaching standards.

The requirements for teacher preparation are designed to support the Graduate Teaching Standards and include a rigorous intellectual preparation with strong subject discipline knowledge, as well as knowledge and skill in the key elements of teaching practice. All teacher education degrees must also include detailed instruction in areas that have been identified as a priority, including classroom and behaviour management, literacy, technology, Aboriginal education, special education and education for students with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

As part of any education qualification all student teachers must spend some

time in a school working as a teacher in practicum placements, developing and demonstrating their knowledge and skills. These placements must be at least 60 days in two year graduate courses and 80 days in four year undergraduate courses.

NSW snapshot

- By and large our initial teacher education providers are producing high quality graduates. However, we know that there is room for improvement, and if we do not continue to search for ways to improve we will not remain a world class system.
- New national standards require that applicants for an education degree should be in the top 30% of the population in literacy and numeracy.
- In NSW in 2012, more than 20% of entrants to undergraduate initial teacher education courses had ATAR scores below 60 and education was the least popular course for students with ATAR scores of 90 or above.
- While ATAR scores are very high in some teacher education institutions and have remained steady in others, some institutions admit a much larger proportion of their cohorts with ATAR scores lower than 60 with some as low as 40.
- Initial teacher education providers annually produce approximately 5,500 graduate teachers. Of these, the majority receive casual and temporary appointments, often for a number of years, and some are never employed as teachers. The NSW Department of Education and Communities employs 300-500 new graduates in permanent positions annually.
- The uncapping of Commonwealth places at universities could see the number of students undertaking initial teacher education courses at university increase.
- Initial teacher education providers are graduating significantly more primary school teachers than are required, and aside from a few subjects like maths, science and languages there is also a large over supply of high school teachers. Completions data from teacher education providers shows that primary teaching completions rose 66% between 2002 and 2010, well in excess of the education sector's workforce needs.
- Students undertaking initial teacher education courses must undertake a practicum in a school. Each year more than 18,000 practicum places must be found in schools. Many students who undertake practicum will not seek or gain employment as a teacher upon graduation.
- Some universities have strong and enduring partnerships with schools in NSW and they ensure the practicum time for those university students is of a high quality. In some instances, practicum placements are last minute arrangements.
- We provide no training or specific policy requirements to ensure that the teacher who will guide a student teacher's practicum experience has the necessary skills needed to provide feedback and evaluate the practicum. Furthermore, there are few incentives to make a good job of it.



- The Staff in Australia's Schools Survey 2010 indicated that fewer than one-third of early career teachers rated their earlier pre-service education courses highly for preparing them to teach students with learning difficulties, students from Aboriginal backgrounds or students from different cultural backgrounds.
- Since 2007, the NSW Institute of Teachers has overseen improvements to all pre-service courses and current pre-service course requirements have been strengthened. The impact of these changes will only be able to be assessed with those graduating in the next few years.

International snapshot

- High performing education systems set minimum university entrance levels for education degrees. Their teacher preparation courses have a strong focus on understanding the science of teaching and learning, critical reflection and applied skills of classroom management.
- High performing systems build into their teaching degrees and career professional development a requirement for rigorous and continuous research.

- In Singapore there is one national provider of teacher education. They have capped the number of students admitted to study teaching which has created vigorous competition for those places.
- In Finland all classroom teachers must have undertaken a master's degree in teaching. Teaching is one of the most sought after professions with many more applicants competing each year for a small number of spaces in teacher preparation programs
- In Korea graduating teachers are given a test to assess how ready they are to start classroom teaching.

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Have your say

- Have we got the right entry requirements for initial teacher education to get the best and brightest into teaching? For instance, should there be minimum ATAR requirements? Should we require applicants to have studied maths, science and/or a language as well as English, as a prerequisite to course entry? Should there be an additional or stronger assessment process of applicants to ensure they possess the personal as well as academic qualities necessary for teaching? Should teacher education only be offered as a postgraduate course?
- How can we encourage more diversity in our teachers? For instance, how can we encourage more Aboriginal Australians and Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds into the teaching profession? What about mature age entrants or career change professionals? How can we attract teachers of subjects where there are skills shortages into the profession?
- Should we limit the number of places in teacher education courses?
- What could we do to improve the practical teaching component of initial teacher education? For instance, should there be a special role in a school for a highly skilled teacher to supervise the practicum? How can universities and schools work together to improve the value of the practicum?
- Should we limit the number of practicum placements to areas of workforce need? For instance, should we have fewer primary school practicum placements and more in secondary maths and science? Should a greater proportion of practicum placements be in rural and remote locations and in metropolitan areas of need?
- How can we build stronger partnerships between schools and teacher education institutions that support both the academic rigour and practical skills in teacher preparation?
- Do we have the right balance of requirements for preparing great teachers? For instance, should there be more emphasis on content discipline studies, on classroom management and/or on the time spent in schools for the practicum placement?
- Should we develop more explicit requirements for a range of specialisations in teaching besides the current subject specialisations (such as special education), including for primary teaching? Could this be integrated into pre-service courses or should it be a set of more explicit postgraduate qualifications?
- What exit assessments might be desirable to ensure the quality of teaching graduates? Should university-based assessments be quality assured to achieve a high state-wide standard in graduating students? How? Should teacher employers employ, or employ as a priority, graduates from universities which have a track record of producing quality graduates who become successful teachers? Should teacher employers set additional requirements for the teachers they employ?
- Should we require teacher education staff in universities to have recent and relevant teaching experience in schools? Should we look at other arrangements that allow teacher educators and teachers in schools to work across and within universities and schools?

Entry into the profession

INSPIRED
LEARNING

ENTRY
INTO THE
PROFESSION

With new teachers joining the profession every year we have an obligation to our students to ensure those teachers are given the support and direction they need in their first few years. Strong pre-service training of teachers needs to be complemented by strong induction and support.

A new teacher can make a huge difference to a school. With the right support and guidance they can bring fresh ideas and new approaches into the classroom and the staffroom.

New teachers will often face situations that are challenging. Like any professional, new teachers need the support of other, more experienced colleagues to work with them to identify which teaching practices work well in what contexts and which ones don't.

Teachers who are now entering our schools have grown up in a world of social networking and collaboration. If we get the balance right, teachers starting in our schools should be able to use technology to get support from other teachers, as well as getting that face to face, real time professional guidance from teachers and principals in their first schools.

The current generation of undergraduates attending university will most likely have a variety of careers in their lifetimes. This means if they become a teacher they may very well enter, leave and re-enter the teaching profession a number of times. We need to build a system that encourages this, while also making sure that those teachers who re-enter the workforce after an extended period out of teaching are classroom ready.



NSW snapshot

- The NSW Institute of Teachers has established processes and a coherent set of standards that allow teacher employing authorities to assess and accredit all new teachers during their first few years of teaching and throughout their career.
- We know that the support and guidance a teacher gets in the first years of their career is critical. While in some schools the induction process

for new teachers is excellent, feedback from many new teachers is that they don't feel like they get enough support in the first few years of teaching.

- With an annual oversupply in the number of graduates, many graduates receive only intermittent casual placements or never teach at all. This often means some teachers spend their first years in classrooms teaching without the sort of mentoring, professional learning and support we offer new permanent teachers.

- The OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2008 data shows us that Australian teachers are likely to say they need extra professional development and support in classroom management when they start teaching in a school.
- In some parts of Australia programs such as Teach for Australia and Teach Next are offering new graduates and career change professionals alternative pathways into teaching. The Institute of Teachers Act allows graduates with a discipline degree to commence teaching while they simultaneously undertake their teaching qualification part-time. Such teachers cannot be fully accredited until they complete the teaching qualification.

International snapshot

- Education systems all over the world are developing ways to make it easier for the best and brightest to join the teaching profession and if they decide they need a break for a few years, to re-join the teaching profession later.
- Some systems use an internship model for beginning teachers. This provides them with an opportunity to gradually transition before they become a fully-fledged permanent teacher.
- The OECD (2011) reports that the best induction programs involve giving new teachers a reduced teaching load, support from a trained mentor teacher and close partnerships with teacher education institutions.
- The OECD (2011) suggests that providing more support for teachers in their first years of teaching may be of more value than having them undertake longer university degrees.



- High performing systems ensure that new teachers are not concentrated in the more difficult school locations. They ensure that there is a reasonably even spread of new teachers and experienced teachers across all schools.
- The OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2008 data shows that increases in the effectiveness of a teacher between the first and second years of their careers are much larger than improvements in their following years as a teacher.

Have your say

- What support do new teachers need when they arrive in our schools? For instance, do they need support in building relationships with other school staff and with parents?
- What models of professional learning are most suited to early career teachers? Should professional learning for new teachers be the same or different from that available to more experienced teachers?
- How can we strengthen induction and early career mentoring support for beginning teachers in schools? For instance, should they be attached to a teacher mentor? Should there be an expectation that only those teachers with higher accreditation levels mentor new teachers, such as the Highly Accomplished Teacher (HAT) or the Quality Teacher positions currently in some NSW government and non-government schools respectively?
- How should we best address performance issues with new teachers?
- As many senior teachers and school leaders who provide support and induction to new teachers have not been accredited themselves, should we aim to make accreditation mandatory for all teachers and school leaders in the future?
- Should there be targeted, 're-entry' short courses that provide expert updating on recent curriculum and teaching practices and requirements for teachers who are returning after a long period of time away from teaching?
- How do we make sure we get an even spread of graduate teachers in all schools across NSW? How can we get more experienced teachers into regional and remote schools and to schools with a high concentration of disadvantage? Should we make sure the demographics of the teachers in all schools is diverse so that there is a mix of experience, gender and ages?



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Develop and maintain professional practice



To ensure we have inspired learning in every classroom in every school, teachers need to develop and maintain their professional practice. Quality professional learning leads to improved teaching practice and improved student outcomes.

The professional learning that teachers undertake should be relevant and world class. It should be aligned to a consensus about what is good teaching practice and be informed by the most up to date evidence about what we know works and what doesn't work.

Professional Teaching Standards in NSW are used as the framework through which teachers are trained and accredited to teach, as well as supporting their professional learning and underpinning their maintenance of accreditation requirements. The new national standards to be introduced over the next two years will continue to support these processes.

Just as we want our students to be lifelong learners, the same applies to teachers. As the curriculum changes teachers need to update their content knowledge. As research about good teaching changes teachers need to modify their approaches to teaching. As technology changes teachers need to understand new technologies and use them in a way that is relevant to students and prepares them for the challenges of the 21st century.

While great teaching matters most, effective school leadership matters next. School leadership that focuses on great teaching is the second most important school-based determinant of student outcomes. Scaling up great teaching

practice so that every student can benefit is the key focus of successful principals and school leaders. High performing school leaders place importance on quality professional practice and the professional learning of their teachers.

As in every profession, not every individual is able to sustain the quality and commitment necessary over time to remain in the profession. We need to find ways we can better support these teachers and still ensure every child is inspired by great teaching. The type and content of teacher feedback matters, so we also need to ensure all teachers receive regular and effective appraisal and feedback on their work.

NSW snapshot

- In NSW all teachers accredited after 1 October 2004 must undertake 100 hours of professional learning over every five year period. Half of this must come from professional learning providers that have been endorsed by the NSW Institute of Teachers.
- Since 2005, all teachers who are accredited by the NSW Institute of Teachers must have their accreditation renewed every five years. This requires their employer to confirm that they continue to meet the Professional Teaching Standards. They must also submit a report reflecting on and assessing their teaching practices.
- Teachers tell us there is great variation in the quality and usefulness of the professional learning available.

- NSW teachers rate collaborative professional learning activities such as lesson observation, lesson preparation, student assessment and structured feedback as the most powerful strategies to impact the quality of their teaching.
- Since 2004, a range of NSW government and non-government schools have been using the NSW Quality Teaching Model as a framework for collaborative planning, lesson observation and feedback in order to understand and analyse their own practice. Research in some NSW schools has shown that teachers who apply the NSW Quality Teaching Model in their classrooms can improve student outcomes.
- A new National Professional Standard for Principals, developed in 2011, makes explicit the role of quality school leadership in improving learning outcomes and provides a framework for professional learning for aspiring and practising principals.
- Australian teachers in the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) in 2008 reported that many of them don't receive regular and effective appraisal and feedback on their classroom practice and of those that do, nearly half report that it is largely an administrative exercise and has little impact on their practice.

- Sometimes teachers who are not of the quality that our children deserve are allowed to remain in classrooms because the processes we have in place to identify poor performance, and remove teachers who are not performing, are complicated and time consuming, or there is not sufficient will to address the issue.
- A new Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework is being developed for introduction from 2013. It will identify the essential elements of an effective performance and development cycle for all teachers across Australia.

International snapshot

- High performing systems enable their teachers to learn from each other. They focus their professional learning on high levels of classroom observation and teacher collaboration. Teachers are provided with the time and are taught how to observe other teachers' classroom practice and give well-reasoned feedback. Their schools have an open door approach where teachers are encouraged to observe and work with each other as professional colleagues.
- In Shanghai teachers are also researchers; they spend a great deal of time analysing the way their students learn and sharing this research with their colleagues.
- High performing systems have developed a career continuum where progression is clearly defined and teachers are able to select professional learning most relevant to their needs.
- High performing principals and school leaders have a strong understanding of classroom practice and the strategies required to promote student learning.
- In high performing systems targeted teacher professional learning is seen as the key strategy for school improvement.
- High performing systems appoint principals with strong teaching skills who have completed a school leadership qualification.
- High performing systems have clearly articulated professional standards below which teachers are not permitted to fall. They have fast and fair processes to either support a teacher to improve, or if this doesn't work remove them from teaching.





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Have your say

- How can schools and school leaders be assisted to assure the quality of teaching in all schools?
- How do we support schools to build a culture of performance and development for all teachers? For instance, how do we make every school an environment where teachers observe each other's teaching practice and collaborate on how to improve student learning?
- Should all teachers be required to demonstrate they have participated in professional learning that has kept their skills, knowledge and teaching practice up to date in order to remain teaching in classrooms? Should all teachers, not just New Scheme teachers, be Institute accredited?
- How can we make sure that teacher professional learning has the greatest impact on student learning outcomes?
- How can teachers get better access to the professional learning they need to achieve quality student learning? How can we support and encourage teachers to analyse data and share research to improve student achievement?
- How can we better support teachers to maintain currency with new technologies in order to support teaching and learning?
- What's the best way to prepare teachers to become principals? For instance, should accreditation as Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher be one of the preconditions for appointment as a principal? What other preconditions or qualifications should we require of those aspiring to be principals?
- How can we better address the issue of any teacher who is consistently not meeting the required standards? For instance, when a teacher is clearly unable to meet the required professional standards to be a classroom teacher even after an appropriate program of support, how do we ensure we have fast, fair and transparent processes to remove them?

Recognise and share outstanding practice

INSPIRED
LEARNING

RECOGNISE
AND SHARE
OUTSTANDING
PRACTICE

Our students deserve a system where the very best teachers are working in schools and classrooms. This means we have to find ways to make teaching a more rewarding career.

We want to keep the best teachers in our classrooms so they can support students and provide support and leadership for other teachers. Our teachers are, however, mostly working in situations where in order to achieve higher wages or higher levels of professional recognition and responsibility in schools, they have to apply for promotional positions that take them away from teaching students.

Teachers who demonstrate outstanding practice need to be recognised and rewarded. These teachers are the ones who are the most important in our system because they provide the modelling of best practice from which other teachers can learn.

To encourage these teachers to stay in our schools we have to develop a career path for them where they can stay in the classroom and, at the same time, be rewarded financially and professionally for taking on more responsibility at the school level and providing leadership for other teachers.

We have a system of higher levels of accreditation for teachers, and only the most skilled teachers achieve these levels of accreditation. The problem is that it takes a lot of time and effort to become a teacher accredited at the higher levels, but there are few financial or career rewards. If we want more teachers obtaining higher levels of accreditation we have to provide better professional and financial incentives for them to do so.



NSW snapshot

- In NSW government schools 60% of teachers are at the top of the teaching pay scale with most of them having achieved this level without ever having to gain accreditation against professional teaching standards. In the future, under Local Schools Local Decisions, salary progression of NSW public school teachers will be based on the attainment of professional standards.
- Last year in NSW only 120 teachers commenced the process to become accredited as Highly Accomplished or Lead Teachers.
- Under the Australian Government's Rewards for Great Teachers Program, NSW teachers who are accredited at the higher levels of accreditation will be eligible for a one-off payment of either \$7,500 or \$10,000 from 2014 to 2018.
- The OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) in 2008 showed that most Australian teachers feel that even if their classroom practices are innovative and they work hard to become a better teacher, they won't be rewarded or recognised for it.

International snapshot

- The OECD (2011) recommends that career paths for teachers based on competences and responsibilities be developed, rather than a promotion based on time served.
- High performing systems have career paths through which their best teachers support the teaching practices of other teachers.
- In countries such as Singapore and Korea, effective teachers are promoted and given more responsibility for teaching and learning. Master teachers are responsible for improving teaching throughout the system.
- In Shanghai, teachers teach larger, but fewer, classes compared with most other systems, including Australia, as a trade-off to free up more time for teachers to engage in collaborative lesson preparation, observation and giving feedback.
- High performing systems sponsor and support innovation within and across schools. They share the results of successful innovations to guide outstanding practice in all schools.
- The OECD (2011) recommends rewarding teachers who can demonstrate excellent performance, by offering incentives such as faster career progression, and opportunities to engage in research and further study.

Have your say

- How can we structure and support access to the higher levels of accreditation with the Institute of Teachers so that this accreditation becomes a core element in building teaching careers and the status of the NSW teaching profession?
- Should teachers who successfully achieve the higher levels of accreditation be paid more, or should teachers who teach in disadvantaged communities, or teachers who teach in remote locations? Should teachers who teach subjects where there are skills shortages be offered additional incentives?
- What can we do to encourage more teachers to undertake the higher levels of accreditation? For instance, should only teachers with higher levels of accreditation be able to apply for promotional positions in schools?
- What is the most reliable way to identify outstanding teaching?
- What would be the best way to acknowledge and reward outstanding teachers?
- What ways, other than financial rewards, could be used to recognise teachers' knowledge, skills and talents?
- Should we provide incentives to encourage and support teachers to upgrade their qualifications, undertake further study and/or gain professionally relevant experience in industry?
- What can schools do to create the conditions for recognising and sharing good practice?
- How can we encourage greater sharing of outstanding and innovative practice within and between schools?



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Submissions can be emailed to greatteaching@det.nsw.edu.au or posted to:

Great Teaching, Inspired Learning
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There will also be an online consultation portal running from 24 August until 5 October. Go to www.schools.nsw.edu.au/greatteaching to find out how you can get involved.



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